CLASSIFICATION SHOPLE Sanitized - Approved For Release Active RDP82-004571R0002 INFORMATIONER 25X1A2a

Ethiopia/France

DATE DISTR.

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7 December 1948

SUBJECT

PLACE ACQUIRED

Proposed Extension of Franco-CUI Ethiopian Railway

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SUPPLEMENT TO

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DATE OF IN

REPORT NO.

1. During July 1948 the Ethiopian Minister of Public Works, Blatta Zaudia Blaineh, approached the representative of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway with an official request that the company consider the extension of the Railway from Addis Ababa westward to Lekenti and Jimma. The representative transmitted this proposal to the President of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway in France; the extension was approved at a meeting of the Board of Directors in August 1948. Comment. That such a proposal should have come from the Ethiopians now is interesting, in view of their past antagonism toward the Franco-Ethiopian Railway Company. In order to build a branch railroad 25X1A6a which would by-pass Djibouti, the Ethiopian Government has seriously considered exchanging part of the Ogaden for the British Somaliland port of Zeila and a connecting corridor along the French Somali frontier. An American adviser to the Ethiopian Government, Perry Fellows, has made preliminary surveys for a railroad from Aussch Station to the port of Assab. Fellows is a consistent advocate of the thesis that French control of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway and its port, Djibouti, is a major factor in the lack of development of Ethiopian economy.

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2. When the Railway representative told the French Minister in Addis Ababa, Jacques de Blessin, of the proposal, the latter expressed the opinion that it conflicted with the Tripartite Treaty of 1906, by which Great Britain, France, and Italy defined their respective spheres of influence in Ethiopia.

Comment. According to the terms of the Treaty, France had commercial and development rights to the east of the meridian of Addis Ababa and Great Britain to the west of it.) The directors of the Railway have requested the French Foreign Office to make a statement on the validity of On several 25X1A6a the Treaty of 1906 but have received no answer. On several occasions the French have given indications that they may wish to keep the provisions of the Treaty of 1906 in force. The British Foreign Office has indicated that it considers the Treaty outmoded and impractical. However, the British Legation in Addis Ababa, in considering the question of Lake Tana, has often cited this treaty in correspondence with the Fereign Office in London.)

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CENTRAL INTELLIGING AGENCY

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- for the entire construction; if the project is to 25X1X6 be realized it will be necessary to obtain the financial participation of the United States or Great Britain, or both. Ethiopia would expect to have some share in the venture, but her financial situation is so precarious at present that her capital investment would be purely nominal. The cost of constructing the railroad line cannot be estimated at present.
- the proposed extension would require the construction of about 225 miles of new line from Akaki Station through Wolkitte to Lekemti, and a branch 65 miles long from below Wolkitte to Jimma. This route lies mainly along the valleys of the Auash, Little Chibie, and Great Chibie Rivers and, while the terrain is rugged, it presents no great engineering problems. The route would open up the potentially richest agricultural sections of Ethiopia, which are now accessible only by unsurfaced roads which are closed for much of the year. Moreover, these roads may be expected to become impassible within about two years, as a result of lack of maintenance. Comment. The Ethiopian Government may consider that the construction of a railroad to Jimma and Lekemti would solve its road-building problems. The railroad would maintain its own right-of-way, whereas the maintenance of roads would create tax and budget problems for the government.)
- 5. During 1947 the Franco-Ethiopian Railway surveyed a route from Mojjo to 25X1A6a Sciasciamamna in Siddamp Province and is working on estimates for its construction. This route is 125 miles long and is entirely within the French sphere as defined in the Treaty of 1906.



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